



Pump Peas Hill, 1907 - 170.69

Cambridge WATER Chronicle, by Mike Petty

1888

1888 10 26

Scheme to obtain further supplies from a spring at Fulbourn, foundation stone laid in October [1.24]

1891

1891

New supply from Fulbourn starts

1897

1897

New pumps installed to supply combined total of 2.5 million gallons a day

1899

1899

Borough council seeks to promote a Bill to allow municipalisation of tramways, lavatories, crematoria & water supply but this is rejected by ratepayers in December [1.10]

1902

1902 12 18

Cambridge Water Company sued Messrs Kerridge and Shaw for water supplied for a building in course of construction in Rose Crescent, Cambridge. The supply recorded by a water meter had increased from 78,000 gallons one quarter up to 220,000 gallons the next. A new meter was installed and consumption fell. They claimed the old meter must have got out of order. But it was quite possible considering the number of taps they were using that one was left running and the water wasted. CDN 1902 12 18

1906

1906 04 04

According to a Government expert who was sent down to inquire into last year's outbreak of typhoid at Fulbourn there is a 'potentially of danger' that the water supply of Cambridge might become contaminated with the Asylum sewage. Their present system is antiquated - it is irrigated over grass land and may percolate through the soil into the vast subterranean lake beneath from which the Water Company pumps their supplies. We do not want even the 'potentially of danger': the public health is too serious a matter about which to take any risks whatever. 06 04 04

1906 04 24

News that the Cambridge water supply might be polluted by sewage from Fulbourn Asylum has spread alarm and is getting the town into disfavour. More than one anxious father or mother as they read the report in 'The Times' will decide "We must send Jack to Oxford" and we fear that the entrance at the University next academic year will suffer considerably. No trace of contamination has been discovered up to present but even the possible risk must be removed. 06 04 24

1906 06 14

Cambridge water supplies might be polluted from sewage from Cherry Hinton and Fulbourn. Householders use pails for the collection of excreta and if this is spread on the land then the possibility of typhoid organisms finding their way into the water supply must be remote. A more serious menace is the soakage of infected matter from improperly-constructed cesspools and the sewage from the Asylum. Some Cambridge people have started to boil their water. 06 06 14a & b

1906 07 25

Considerable panic has prevailed in Cambridge following a rumour that typhoid germs have been found in the water supply. Recently certain organisms known as 'coli' which closely resemble the typhoid bacilli were discovered but they are absolutely innocuous. However in view of the boring operations near Fulbourn Asylum and the remote possibility of contamination experts suggest that all drinking water should be boiled. 06 07 25b

1907 04 27

It is alleged that Hobson's Stream is being 'tapped' by some unauthorised body and the supply of water for public purposes is fast diminishing. Not so. To restore its former volume it simply needs flushing. Water comes from Shelford to the conduit in as plentiful a supply as ever but it is many years since the pipe which feeds the Market Hill fountain was adequately flushed and an accumulation of rubbish prevents it receiving the amount of water it should. There is some difficulty in deciding whether the town council or the Hobson's Charity are responsible, but the cost would not exceed £5. 07 04 27

1908

1908 02 19

An inquiry into Cambridge water supplies heard that the bulk of the sewage from the female side of Fulbourn Asylum was disposed of in the Rectory Field and that from the male to the west. This was found to be faulty, very faulty. In 1905 there was a serious outbreak of typhoid fever at Asylum with some 70 cases and 16 deaths after which Dr Copeman investigated. He did not want to be alarmist but an inquiry into possible sewage contamination would reassure the public. 08 02 19 & 20 [1.11]

1908 12 11

Government Inspectors say a large source of Cambridge water should be abandoned as it is dangerous to the lives and health of the inhabitants. It had been suggested that contamination came from Fulbourn Asylum sewage but the experts say the danger comes from the villages of Cherry Hinton and Fulbourn where the method of sewage disposal are at the very least primitive. Even if sewage was excluded from the present leaky sewers it would still be disposed of in cesspools and there is no certainty that these would not leak. CWN 08 12 11

1909

1909

Investigation finds bacillus but Water Company reluctant to give details [1.12,1.13]

1910

1910

Company seek a Bill to sterilise by chlorine or ozone both Cherry Hinton and Fulbourn works but this fails. Parliamentary approval given to construct a new well and pumping station at Fleam Dyke, work starts

1910 04 15

Cambridge Waterworks Company's Bill passed by select committee of the House of Lords. It would allow for the sinking of a new well outside the polluted area.. But if the prehistoric methods of sewage disposal in villages been corrected the whole problem could have been ended. 10 04 15, 15c & d

1911

1911

Borough council try to acquire powers to purchase water undertakings. Bill passes Select Committee of House of Lords on April 8th but with conditions that involve scrapping the existing water works & providing for a fresh supply from Fleam Dyke. Later the Select Committee decline to add the clause to the Waterworks Bill [1.14]

1911 01 27

'Water supply pure' claim [1.15]

1911 08 25

The longest drought since 1887 has happily come to an end and heavy rains have reduced the torrid heat. In Cambridge the hottest day was August 9th when the temperature was 95 degrees in the shade. Messrs Pain's records go back 43 years and the only other record of that figure was on 15th August 1876. During violent thunderstorms lightning set fire to farm buildings at Friday Bridge but the brigade was powerless as there was no water to put it out. 11 08 25a

1921

1921

Fleam Dyke station opens, was delayed because of World War 1 Fulbourn and Cherry Hinton works close down

1921 03 23

Waterworks Company proposed Parliamentary Bill opposed by local authorities – 21 03 23h

1931

1931 04

Borough Council promote Bill to acquire the Waterworks company in April, [1.21, 1.22]

1931 04 10

Since 1904 the charges for the water and the poor rates have each risen by over 300 per cent. But whereas the services of lighting, better paths, roads and sewerage have increased enormously the supply of water has been just the same. The Water Company has simply passed any extra charges on to the consumer. Now they are unwilling to agree to a take-over by Cambridge Town Council. But no parliament will refuse any town the right to its own water supply. The anti-Socialist composition of our legislators leaves no doubt that the stockholders will be generously treated 31 04 10l-n

1931 04 10

Waterworks purchase proposal – history of water company – 31 04 10d-n

1931 12 18

A crowded meeting at Cambridge Guildhall threw out proposals for the Corporation to take over the Waterworks Company. Were they going to get a cheaper or more efficient service? No. There had been no serious criticisms of the management and there would be heavy legal expenses and compensation to directors. But the creator had given mankind three essential things: sunshine, air and water and it was immoral for water to be kept from the people by private enterprise. 31 12 18 e f g

1933

1933 01 27

Water Company's scheme – new main for Cambridge – 33 01 27e & f

1933 02 20

Waterworks company list of plumbers – 33 02 20b

1934

1934 11 24

“This is the first time in history that a water company has of its own free will undertaken the softening of its supply”, the Chairman of the Cambridge Waterworks Company said at the laying the foundation stone of its new water-softening station on Fulbourn Road. Cambridge water is abundant and pure but being drawn from a chalk formation is of necessity hard in quality. A considerable number of private water-softening plants have been installed but these will soon not be worth their salt and people should ignore the blandishment of salesmen. 34 11 24b

1935

1935 06 07

It will cost less to wash in Cambridge from now on, thanks to the Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Company's new water-softening station at Cherry Hinton whose plant was designed by Messrs Roby of London. They were a public utility company which while it had a duty to their shareholders, also had a duty to the public. So when in 1934 the Company had at long last freed itself from the heavy financial drain incurred by the obsolescence of the old Fulbourn pumping station, much consideration was given to the problem of how subsequent revenue surplus could be handed back to its customers. 35 06 07 & a (continued until 1975)

1936

1936 10 20

King's College had employed a firm to supply a pump to serve half-a-dozen jets of water at their fountain. They had intended to use the water over and over again but found that with the heavy wind the water was blown over the gravel and did not go back into the fountain. So they had connected the mains to make up the loss. This contravened Water Company byelaws and there was a danger of contaminating the supply 36 10 20a

1937

1937 03 27

Waterworks Company new workshop and depot foundation stone, Rustat Road – 37 03 27c [1.5]

1937 10 23

Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Company's new workshops and depots in Rustat Road would lead to improved service, enhanced efficiency and – sooner or later – reduced charges. The old premises in Bene't Street had been a veritable shambles and disgrace with pipes stored at the disused Cherry Hinton and Fulbourn pumping stations. They would wage ceaseless war against waste by leakage and had a gang of plumbers ready to deal with any emergency 24 hours a day with the promptitude of the London Fire Brigade. 37 10 23b

1938

1938 03 22

Market Hill fountain water not fit for human consumption – 38 03 22e

1938 05 30

Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Co, new workshops & depot – 38 05 30g

1939

1939 04 27

Progress is being made on the construction of the Cambridge Waterworks Company's new reinforced concrete service reservoir on Lime Kiln Road. With a capacity of two million gallons, it will double the available storage so that in the event of a breakdown at the pumping station the supply could be maintained for practically two days. Over 1,400 tons of concrete and 150 tons of steel will be used. When finished the banks and roof will be soiled and sown with grass seed to provide effective camouflage for something which would doubtless prove attractive to raiding aeroplanes 39 04 27a

1939 05 01

It is unlikely that the Water Company's source of supply, the Fleam Dyke pumping station, would be chosen as a target by enemy bombers or that a direct could put both duplicate sets of machinery out of action. However the disused Fulbourn pumping station has been completely reconditioned as a precaution. But if Cambridge was raided it is almost inevitable that water mains would sustain considerable damage the Manager said. The Company supplied water to 81,000 people but this may well be increased to over 110,000 by evacuations from London, 39 05 01 & a

1939 07 22

Waterworks new service reservoir is most up-to-date in country; Fulbourn pumping station brought back into use as ARP standby; history – 39 07 22

1939 12 16

The new concrete reservoir on Lime Kiln Hill has been built partly below ground and covered with earth which will be sown with grass seed, adding a pleasant green mound to the skyline. To guard against an interruption in supply due to a breakdown of pumping machinery or the bursting of trunk mains, the Water Company now had a duplicate plan together with a reserve of four million gallons – nearly two days' supply – in its three reservoirs. 39 12 16

1939 12 22

Cambridge Waterworks Company's new 2,000,000 gallon reservoir on Lime Kiln Hill, Cherry Hinton, opened. 39 12 22 CIPof

1943

1943 10 20

East Huntingdonshire Water Company wound up – set up 1887 to establish water works in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, recently taken over by a joint water board formed by the Ministry of Health – 43 10 20

1945

1945 07 13

Waterworks booster station, Castle Hill opened to boost supplies to north Cambridge – CDN 1945 07 13

1947

1947 01

Housewives are dealt yet another blow today. Cambridge University & Town Waterworks company will reluctantly be compelled to close down the water softening plant at Cherry Hinton. Cambridge's water will then be about twice its present hardness. There have been drastic reductions in the coal required to evaporate the brine at the salt works in Cheshire. Mr Philip Porteous, managing director of the company told a reporter "The Government takes the view that water softening is one of those

amenities without which we can manage in times of crisis, but we appreciate only too well the difficulties of the housewife in these days of soap rationing

1953

1953 06 18

Cambridge Waterworks Company celebrate centenary, June [1.18]

1953 06 24

There is no need for Cambridge people to be stingy about water, said the Chairman of Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Company. "The company in all its 100 years' history has never had to tell people that they must not water their gardens", he said. But he also stressed the need for consumers to avoid wastage. With an average of four people in each household domestic water cost each person about 1d a week – half the cost of one cigarette.

1953 10 12

The condition of the stone of the conduit head on Cambridge Market Hill has been found to be much worse than anticipated during recent demolition work and so the Council will be recommended not to rebuild it. The condition of the stone was such that the only part which could be safely re-used was the four pillars and the cost of restoration would be at least £4,000, double the previous estimate. They propose to loan the carved figures from the conduit to the Folk Museum. 53 10 12

1953 10 12

A decision not to rebuild the Conduit head in Market Hill, Cambridge was described as a retrograde step by Ald James. "I know it is the fashion to run down Victorian architecture but I think it was very seemly. I think we should rebuild it in the same style". But Ald Priest said "If in ten years' time people see pictures of the Conduit as it was, there will be nothing to prevent them from replacing it by photographs. The majority of people are quite satisfied and the Secretary of the Preservation Society has written to say how nice we have made it". 53 10 12

1954

1954

Fulbourn pumping station reopens September [1.19]

1954 03 01

The Cambridge Water Company is to start work immediately on a new five-million-gallon reservoir on Lime Kiln Hill which will double the reserves of water. Rainfall during the winter months had been substantially below average and the replenishment of underground water storage severely diminished. A low rainfall next year might endanger their ability to maintain supplies during periods of peak demand. Improvement had also been made to the Fulbourn Pumping Station where new machinery would soon be installed; this will afford temporary relief from the situation where demand for water had equalled their maximum yield

1955

1955 09 25

Cherry Hinton water-softening station opens, July [1.20]

1955 11 17

Cam valley water supply scheme – 55 11 17b

1956

1956 08 03

Sir George Thomson, a Nobel prizewinner in physics and Master of Corpus, said that by 1975 the majority of the electricity generating stations would be driven by nuclear energy which in future would replace 'fossil fuels'. At present motor cars run on fuel derived from oil, but nobody knew how long this would last. A more immediate problem was a shortage of water; even the rainfall of

Cambridge was near the desert limit, we are taking out more than is going in and shall have to cut down. 56 08 03

1957

1957 11 28

Hobson's Run, the water channel down each side of St Andrew's Street near Christ's Lane is neither picturesque nor traditional, councillors said. It was originally built to carry away the refuse thrown from houses in St Andrew's Street but was a danger to cyclists and shoppers were often splashed. Now it will be diverted underground to allow the road to be widened. 57 11 28

1958

1958 01 17

suggestion to put Hobson's Conduit underground between Emmanuel & Christ's college, only 50 years old, no water runs down it; decide to go ahead [3.1]

1958 01 31

Should Hobson's run be preserved – 58 01 17 and history – 58 01 31a

1958 03 03

Cambridge Water Company originally hoped the new Great Wilbraham pumping station would help meet the ever-growing demand, even in times of severe drought, until 1965. But the experiences of last summer have prompted a less optimistic view and they were sinking a trial bore near Stapleford. They are also moving from Bene't Street, where they have been since 1866, to new offices in Rustat Road. 58 03 03

1958 09 20

Cambridge Water Company opened its new office block in Rustat Road. It was formed 106 years ago by twelve townsmen and ten prominent members of the University and now supplies 120,000 people. There was an exhibition of nylon sink tops, Perspex baths and fibre glass cisterns instead of the old-fashioned ones made of galvanised iron 58 09 20a[1.25]

1960s the Cambridgeshire Collection has taken newspaper cuttings files from this date

1961

1961 05 12

Chesterton and St Ives Joint Water Board to transfer water undertakings to Cambridge University & Town Waterworks Company – 61 05 12a

1962

1962 01 06

Water undertakings administered by local authorities in St Ives, Ramsey, Chesterton and South Cambridgeshire are to be transferred to the Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Company – 62 01 06a

1962 07 17

Hobson's Conduit section Gonville Place & University Arms abandoned, causing problems under houses & new pipe laid Parkers Piece [3.3]

1963

1963 01 24

City water mains frozen, January [1.26]

1963 04 01

Company's area of supply extended from 60 to 453 square miles & name changed to 'Cambridge Water Company' : have taken over other supplies, including South Cambs & Chesterton RDC following many objections after discussions since 1959 [4.3-6]

1966

1966 05 20

New £4.75 reservoir Lime Kiln Hill in use within year [4.7]

1967

1967 04 08

Hobson's Conduit: plaque to commemorate restoration [3.2]

1967 10 16

Parish Pump Peas Hill removed for repairs but no re-erection due to cost, was used to wash down old fish market; goes to Folk Museum [3.5]

1973

1973 04 19

Water Act creates Anglian Water Authority but Cambridge Water Company functions as agent for water supply drought, water levels lower than ever before [4.9]

1976

1976

Fleam Dyke steam pumping engines finally stop after 56 years

1976 04 30

Eleven month drought, only half rainfall in last 12 months (to July) some County houses cut off due shortage but Cambridge Water Company supplies adequate [4.11]

1976 07 19

Cambridge Water Company fight AWA take over [4.10]

1976 08 26

Hobson's Brook dries up possibly for first time [3.4]

1977

1977 07 14

Cambridge Water Company stays stays independent AWA [4.12]

1981

1981 04 29

More than 8,000 old wells could be tapped if water supplies are threatened. But many have fallen into disuse, are capped or not officially recorded. The water could be quite usable since they are on underlying chalkland which acts as a great purifying agent but the Anglian Water Authority are concerned about the risk of pollution: it wouldn't do for them to distribute contaminated water. 81 04 29

1983

1983 03

Water workers strike [4.13]

1983 06 17

The giant Fleam Dyke steam engines that supplied Cambridge's water for more than 50 years are slowly disappearing. The twin 180-horse-power horizontal engines, named Anderson and Lilley, stopped working back in 1976 and are now being dismantled for scrap. They were a showpiece for

parties of visiting schoolchildren until a massive piece of machinery flew off. Now parts will be going to steam engine centres or sold to private buyers. They are just too big and expensive to move 83 06 17 p24

1987

1987 06 10

A water pumping station at Fulbourn is to be closed and replaced by two others costing £1 million. The old pumping station, which opened in 1888, will be sold raising money to offset the cost. It was too close to a built-up area, posing danger of pollution, and did not produce enough water. The new stations are at a field at the edge of the village and Weston Colville. 87 06 10

1987 06 17

Fleam Dyke engines dismantled [4.14]

1988

1988 07 07

Cambridge Water Company subject to French take-over bid [CEN 7.7.88]

1988 12 01

Fulbourn water pumping station was built by the Cambridge University & Town Waterworks Company in 1888. The pump was taken out of service last year. Now it may be turned into a house and four flats. Sale by auction 88 12 01b

1989

1989 01 23

Cambridge Water Co now safe from French takeover cCEN 23.1.89

1990

1990 05 25

Cambridge Water Company state of emergency following mains burst – 90 05 25a